



by CHERON SMALLS, SHRM-SCP, SPHR



CHERON SMALLS  
Director of Human Resources &  
Talent Management

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## *"The Moment of Lift" Makes Its Mark*

### How Engage's First Book Club Read Generated Meaningful Discussion

RiverFront launched a women's initiative, Engage, in the fall of 2019. Our focus is to engage women in Financial Services through mentorship, education, and support. Hosting speakers, planning a women's conference, connecting with students through externships, and launching a mentoring program were highlights for Engage during our first year.

Recently, the "education" part of our mission has taken the path of an informal book club. The value of a book club is that it challenges readers to dig into a book that they may never have selected on their own. It pushes you outside of your comfort zone of favorite authors, writing styles, and genres. Stephanie Martin, Senior Executive Assistant to the President & CEO, serves on the Engage leadership team. One of the many ways that Stephanie supports the Engage mission is by coordinating our book club. Her first pick for us was *"The Moment of Lift"* by Melinda Gates. It didn't take long for those of us who'd read just a few chapters to go back to Stephanie to say, "great pick" and "I can't wait to discuss this with everyone else".

*"The Moment of Lift"* opened our eyes to ongoing challenges for women across the world. The book also explored a number of challenges and hurdles that women face (and overcome) here in the United States. Instead of leaving a reader discouraged, Gates' stories provided insight into the ways things are turning in the right direction for women, even in the most impoverished countries. Yet, as those stories and messages leapt off the page, it stirred up a desire to do more, to understand more, and to appreciate the impact that women have on the greater success of a family, a village, a nation, and our world.

Inspired and excited after reading *"The Moment of Lift"*, we wondered how some of our male peers at RiverFront might view the topics and insights in the book. Would they read it? Would they be turned off at the idea of reading a "feminist" book? Would the stories and the messages in the book resonate with them?

Knowing that RiverFront associates love a fun competition, we decided to pose a challenge to our male coworkers. Ten brave men accepted the challenge to read *"The Moment of Lift"* – and then to publicly share their thoughts and views on the book. We enjoyed hearing their perspectives after reading the book and how it changed their mindset on certain topics.

Our concern that our coworkers would be hesitant about a "feminist" book was unfounded. In fact, Brad Williams, Regional Sales Director, shared that he could now consider himself a feminist, based on Gates' explanation in the book that "...being a feminist means believing that every woman should be able to use her voice and pursue her potential. That women and men should all work together to take down the barriers and end the biases that still hold women back."

Cole Elliott, Regional Sales Consultant, shared "...it gave me great pleasure in realizing the parallel in what Melinda Gates is writing about and what RiverFront is doing in empowering women—internally with our female associates and externally in our work in the financial services business and our communities."

Our President & CEO, Pete Quinn shared one of his favorite quotes from the book, "...If I ever find myself separate or superior, if I try to lift myself up by pulling others down...If I have a feeling I am above them instead of trying to rise with them, then I have isolated myself from them. And I have cut myself off from the moment of lift." Another one of Pete's favorites quotes from the book: "Male allies are essential." We know this to be true, and we are grateful for our male allies at RiverFront who have championed the mission of Engage alongside us for the last year.

Engage is moving forward with a number of initiatives this year, but our mission of education will still be paramount. We look forward to many more reads together.

## About ENGAGE

RiverFront founded Engage in 2019 with the goal of changing and improving the experience for women in financial services. The mission of Engage is to engage women in our industry through mentorship, education, and support.

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